
ATTITUDE TOWARD FEMVERTISING: ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

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ABSTRACT:

One marketing strategy that is widely used by companies is femvertising, namely advertisements that depict a positive image and empower women. Even so, research on femvertising and its effects is still very limited. This study aims to see how the influence of the antecedent variables (perceived congruence, perceived authenticity, self-consciousness and need for emotion) on the attitude toward femvertising. After that, it will also be seen how the impact of attitude toward femvertising has on brand attitude, purchase intention and E-WOM intention. The study will be conducted using a quantitative approach and SEM analysis, with data collection methods through questionnaires which will be distributed online to 285 respondents consisting of female and male consumers in all of Indonesia. The results of this study will help companies know the effect of femvertising on consumer attitudes and buying decisions to make the right advertising marketing strategy. To date, very few femvertising studies in Indonesia have focused on the antecedent and consequence variables as described in this paper.

Keywords: femvertising, attitude toward femvertising, brand attitude, purchase intention, E-WOM intention, perceived congruence.

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INTRODUCTION

Along with the rapid development of today's industry, many new brands are

emerging to make business competition increasingly stringent (Morrar et al., 2017). The company must compete to make

advertising and promotion strategies as creative as possible to win consumer sympathy for its brand (Muñiz Jr & Schau, 2011). One of the advertising strategies that has been carried out by many companies is: including issues or messages that touch emotions and spark conversation, for example, social issues that are currently circulating in society. In times of trouble, political and social are at the forefront of every aspect of our lives, companies are expected not only to sell products but also to demonstrate good faith and ethical behavior in daily business practices (McWilliams & Siegel, 2011; Sternadori & Abitbol, 2019).

One type of advertising that tries to touch the emotional side of the target consumer is Femvertising. Femvertising can be defined as a strategy for depicting girls and women through empowering messages and images (Skey, 2015; Sternadori & Abitbol, 2019). Femvertising itself has become widely known since 2014 and can be said to be a type of advertisement that contains a message of women's empowerment, challenging the representation of women based on stereotypes that have developed in society so far. Internationally, femvertising continues to grow and become quite a popular topic in the marketing world. Searches about femvertising on Google have increased rapidly, including being discussed in major media (CNN, The Guardian, Huffington Post).

Furthermore, in 2015, an award ceremony in the advertising world called

the Cannes Lions Awards made an award for the best advertising category in overcoming the problem of gender inequality (Sterbenk et al., 2022). This development of femvertising shows that brands are starting to regard it as a successful strategy to target female consumers (Åkestam, 2018). Other research also states that the use of feminist values in marketing strategies is increasingly being used around the world because it influences consumer behavior, especially female consumers (El Hajjar et al., 2022).

Seeing the fact that femvertising has been recognized as an important marketing strategy to attract more female consumers and build strong emotional relationships with potential female consumers, it is then important to investigate what factors influence the evaluation of femvertising (Um, 2021). One aspect that can be assessed from femvertising is the attitude of existing and potential customers towards femvertising, so this research will focus on the attitude toward femvertising, specifically examining the antecedents and consequences of an attitude toward femvertising.

Jinah (2022) in his research on female respondents in South Korea found that perceived congruence and perceived authenticity an influential antecedents in the formation of an attitude toward femvertising. Other research also examines customer behavior towards femvertising and finds that a person's self-consciousness and need for emotion also affect the attitude toward femvertising (Kapoor &

Munjal, 2019). After knowing what variables precede and influence the attitude toward femvertising, then it is necessary to examine what is the impact of a certain attitude that customers have toward advertising. Variables that have been tested are significantly influenced by attitude toward femvertising and the consequences are brand attitude, purchase intention, and e-WOM intention (Sharma & Bumb, 2022).

Kapoor & Munjal (2019) in their research also tested the attitude toward femvertising as an antecedent of forwarding and purchase intention, it was found that a positive attitude towards advertising can influence customer forwarding behavior. It is deemed necessary to carry out further research on context and antecedent variables and different consequences. The results of this follow-up research are expected to be useful for companies and consumers in Indonesia and other countries where the issue of women's empowerment is still developing and becoming a concern.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing Communications

Marketing communication is defined as a means used by providers of goods, services, values, or ideas to represent themselves to the target audience to trigger dialogue that will result in better sales or relationships (Egan et al., 2019). From this definition, it is explained that companies use marketing communication strategies to communicate with target consumers about their products. The communication is

expected to convey information about their products and services, then persuade audiences to take action. Marketing communication is included in the marketing mix, precisely in the promotion section, where several tools can be used, such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion, online/social media marketing, and many others. Given that this research will focus on advertisements with the theme of women's empowerment (femvertising) as a marketing promotion tool, marketing communication theory is needed to explore which advertisements will be selected and how the audience responds to these advertisements.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The elaboration likelihood theory explains how someone processes a persuasive message. This theory begins with the premise that in evaluating messages, individuals go through a complicated process by thinking critically, but sometimes also through a simple process (Foss et al., 2021). There are two routes in processing information, namely the central route and the peripheral route. Individuals who go through the central route will think more actively and evaluate new information using the knowledge they already have. An individual tends to use the central route in processing messages if the topic conveyed is relevant, has prior knowledge of the topic, the quality of the argument is high, or the source is considered credible (Foss et al., 2021). In short, persuasion through the central route is achieved from careful consideration and testing of relevant issues

(O'Keefe et al., 2015). Meanwhile, if the information is processed through the peripheral route, the level of elaboration is low, so individuals do not think critically and accept persuasion based on simple considerations (Foss et al., 2021; O'Keefe et al., 2015). Peripheral routes depend more on affective responses to information, where these affective reactions can affect attitudes under certain conditions (Thorson & Rodgers, 2012). Changes in attitude resulting from the peripheral route are temporary, whereas changes resulting from the central route tend to be more permanent (Foss et al., 2021).

Gender Stereotype and Female Representation in Advertising

Gender stereotypes are related to congruity theory which states that people value information or descriptions that are in accordance with existing social and cognitive schemes, where gender role stereotypes are part of this scheme (De Meulenaere et al., 2017; Ko et al., 2015). Referring to this theory, the gender stereotypes that have so far been shown in advertisements should be able to trigger a positive advertisement attitude and response because they conform to the traditional social gender schemes that exist in society. However, other studies show different results, that advertising should not display gender stereotype messages because it can actually reduce consumer ad attitudes. This is because the counter-stereotypical appeal is considered more surprising so it can lead to more positive feelings (De Meulenaere et al., 2017). In

addition, the issue of the use of stereotypes, especially in advertisements, has often been highlighted by the global community. When gender roles in society change, marketers are in danger if they still alienate consumers by using traditional gender stereotypes (De Meulenaere et al., 2017).

Femvertising

Femvertising can be defined as a contemporary advertising campaign that questions traditional female gender stereotypes used in advertising and uses pro-women talents or models and contains messages and images to empower women (Åkestam et al., 2017; Drake, 2017).

Perceived Congruence

To explore perceived congruence, researchers use the congruence effect theory which explains how the suitability or incompatibility between two elements in an advertisement can affect the effectiveness of the advertisement (Shin et al., 2018). Other studies have also examined various relationships between the two elements in advertising, such as product and endorser (Carrillat & d'Astous, 2013; Shin et al., 2018), product and media (Shin et al., 2018), media contents and ad appeals (Shin et al., 2018). as well as sponsors and events (Shin et al., 2018). Most studies show that the presence of congruence or conformity in advertising produces positive consequences for advertising effectiveness (Shin et al., 2018).

Perceived Authenticity

In this study, the evaluation of authenticity will emphasize the concept of

realism and meaning. Realism is used to see the truth in the depiction of women's images in femvertising so that advertising messages are perceived as authentic. In addition, the meaning or meaningful elements will see how the messages conveyed in femvertising regarding gender equality and women's empowerment give meaning and trigger positive feelings in consumers.

Self-Consciousness

Self-consciousness can affect responses to advertising messages (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019). Self-consciousness can be defined as the extent to which an individual cares about the reactions of others to him when interacting (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019). There are three scales used to measure self-consciousness, namely private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness and social anxiety to assess both the public and private aspects of self-consciousness (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019).

Need for Emotions

The influence of emotions on individual judgments and decision-making is important in marketing and consumer psychology (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019). The need for emotion can be defined as an individual's tendency to seek emotional situations, enjoy emotional stimulation, and show a preference for using emotions in interacting with the outside world (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019). Because emotions are subjective and different for each person, individual reactions to emotional stimulation from advertisements will also be different.

Attitude toward Femvertising

Attitude toward advertising can be defined as the tendency of consumers during certain exposure situations to respond favorably or unfavorably to certain advertising stimuli (Um, 2021). Most studies state that attitudes have three interdependent dimensions, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The cognitive dimension refers to the perception of a particular object (perceived informativeness, advertising credibility, etc.); the affective dimension refers to feelings towards the object (pleasure, anger, etc.); while behavioral relates to the actions that individuals want to take in relation to the object (following or avoiding exposure to advertisements, buying decisions, etc.).

Brand Attitude

According to Van Praet (2012), brand attitude is the result of a positive or negative predisposition towards a brand (affective component), based on beliefs (the cognitive component) about it, which in turn influences behavioral tendencies related to a particular brand (conative component). Humans learn attitudes or acquire them through personal experience, exchange opinions with others about their memories of their experiences, and obtain information from different sources or based on conclusions (Siddiqi & Akhtar, 2021).

In relation to femvertising, previous research found that when compared to traditional advertising, femvertising was

shown to reduce ad resistance. This will then increase brand attitude among the female audience (Åkestam, 2018).

Purchase Intention

Purchase Intention can be understood as an individual's intention to buy a particular brand that they choose for themselves after going through certain evaluations (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019; Nguyen & Nguyen-Xuan, 2015). Advertising helps in disseminating product information to a large number of customers and getting their purchase intention (Halim & Hamed, 2005). The higher the purchase intention, the higher the possibility of customer willingness to buy a product (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019).

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) Intention

Electronic word of mouth or commonly called e-WOM is an extension of word of mouth (WOM) which refers to the way consumers obtain information from interpersonal sources such as family and friends (Chu & Kim, 2018). Consumers consider information from interpersonal sources to be more reliable than commercial advertising messages (Chu & Kim, 2018) so WOM is considered an important source of information in changing consumer attitudes and behavior toward products and services (Chu & Kim, 2018). With ever-developing technology, WOM is now expanding into the online world and social media that makeup e-WOM.

WOM intention has an important role in making purchasing decisions. Previous research found that positive WOM will

increase consumer interest in a product or service (Chu & Kim, 2018). When there is interest, motivation arises to share advertisements with those closest to them through social media. Positive WOM can be formed from attitudes toward marketing on social media, for example, advertising promotions, where when a good attitude towards advertising has been created, consumer WOM intention will also increase (Chu & Kim, 2018).

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study will use a quantitative method with descriptive analysis, which is a method of data analysis to describe the data that has been collected as it is without aiming to draw generally accepted conclusions or generalizations. Descriptive statistics have three uses, namely: (1) the collected data can be presented concisely and provide core information from a large amount of existing data; (2) allows researchers to present data using either numerical techniques or graphical techniques; (3) allows researchers to measure two characteristics of each respondent and then examine the relationship between the two characteristics (variables) (Amiruddin et al., 2022).

Data Analysis

The data analysis technique that will be used in this study is the Structural Equation Model (SEM). The main application of SEM used in this study is a causal model. SEM is a multivariate

statistical technique that is a combination of factor analysis and regression analysis (correlation) to test the relationship between variables in a model, both between indicators and constructs and relationships between constructs (Santoso, 2018). Santoso (2018) says that the SEM itself is divided into two, the first is the measurement model, which is part of the SEM model which describes the relationship between latent variables and their indicators. The second is the structural model, which is a model that describes the relationship between latent variables or between exogenous (influencing) variables and endogenous variables.

In this study, the steps in SEM that will be used are Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to test whether existing indicators can really explain a construct. After conducting CFA, researchers will be able to see whether the indicators of existing latent variables (perceived congruence, perceived authenticity, self-consciousness, need for emotion, attitude toward femvertising, brand attitude, purchase intention, and e-WOM intention) have a strong effect or not. Besides that, multiple regression analysis (T-test) will also be carried out, namely to test the structural model. By doing this analysis it will be known whether there is a significant relationship between exogenous (independent) variables and endogenous (dependent) variables. If there is, it will be seen how strong the relationship is (Santoso, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sample and Data Collection

The sampling method that will be used in this study is probability sampling, to be precise simple random sampling because the respondent criteria determined by the researcher are still quite general so that each member of the population has a probability of being selected as a sample (Supratiknya, 2022). The sample of this study are women and men who live in Indonesia, are in the age group of Gen X (born 1965 – 1980), Gen Y/Millennials (born 1981 – 1996) and Adult Gen Z (born 1997 – 2006), have access to advertisements through print, television and internet media and active use of social media. This study will use a sample of 285 respondents with 57 indicators. This number is obtained by multiplying 5 by the number of indicators (S. Davcik, 2014).

The survey was conducted online. Majority of respondents were contacted personally and few respondents were sent the questionnaire link through social media (Instagram and Facebook). In order to assess the attitude towards femvertising, respondents were exposed to advertisements promoting feminism. Three of the advertisements are Dove “Rambutku Mahkotaku”, Kecap ABC “Suami Sejati Mau Masak” and Wardah “Beauty Moves You” which are popular on social media.

Once respondents watched the ads, they further completed the survey rating their attitude towards such types of ads; their intention to forward these ads to

others and their intention to purchase the advertised brand.

Development of Survey Instrument

The questionnaire in this study was developed based on existing scales to measure all the variables. The following scales were assessed in this research:

1. Self-consciousness Scale

Self-consciousness scale has been developed by Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975) and revised by Scheier and Carver (1985) to be used with general population. SSC consisted of 21 items measuring three dimensions: Public self-consciousness, Private self-consciousness and Social Anxiety. It was measured on a scale of 1 (meaning the statement does not describe you at all) to 6 (meaning the statement describes you very well).

Private self-consciousness refers to the tendency to think about and attend to the more covert and hidden aspects of the self, aspects that are personal in nature and not easily accessible to the scrutiny of other people, i.e., the individuals privately held beliefs, values and feelings. Public self-consciousness can be defined as the tendency to think about those self-aspects that are matters of public display, qualities of the self from which impressions are formed in other person's eyes, i.e., one's overt behavior, mannerisms and expressive qualities. Social Anxiety assesses the degree of chronic discomfort felt by the person in the presence of others.

2. Need for Emotions Scale

Raman (1995) developed Need for Emotion Scale in order to assess the tendency or propensity for individuals to enjoy emotional stimuli, seek emotional situations and exhibit a preference to use emotion in interacting with the world. It consisted of 12 items measured on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. All the items were reverse coded in order to analyze the respondents' need for emotional stimuli.

3. Attitude towards Advertisement (Femvertising)

In order to understand the attitude of females towards advertisements, this study uses the following three 7-point semantic differential scales: very bad-very good, very unfavorable-very favorable, like very much-dislike very much according to (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989).

4. Brand Attitude

Attitude toward brand (Ab) was measured using five 7-point semantic differential scales: unappealing-appealing, bad-good, unpleasant-pleasant, unfavorable-favorable, and unlikable-likable according to (Spears & Singh, 2004).

5. E-WOM Intention

Respondents were also asked to rate their intention to discuss contents of femvertising and forward these to friends/relatives through social media. Respondents were asked to evaluate

using four items on a 6-point scale, anchored by “strongly disagree” (1) and “strongly agree” according to (Till & Busler, 2000).

6. Purchase Intention

Three items constituted to measure the purchase intention, on a 7-point scale, anchored by “strongly disagree” (1) and “strongly agree” according to (Till & Busler, 2000) and (Putrevu & Lord, 1994).

Pre Test

To measure the extent to which the indicators or measuring instruments in the questionnaire are valid or good at measuring the variables to be studied, a validity test is carried out. This test was carried out using the SPSS application with a significance level of $\alpha = 5\%$. The results of the validity test are as follows:

With a significance level of 5% it can be concluded that V2.1, V2.4, and V2.5 in variable V2, V3.6 in variable V3, V4.7 and V4.10 in variable V4, V5.4 in variable V5 are declared not valid, while others are declared valid.

As for reliability, with a significance level of 5% it can be concluded that V1, V3, V4, V5, V6, V7, V8, V9, V10 are declared reliable, while V2 is declared unreliable.

CONCLUSION

It can be said that femvertising is an advertising method that has been widely used by companies because it is proven to be able to attract consumer sympathy, especially female consumers. This study analyzes the things that influence consumer

attitudes towards femvertising and the things that are caused by this attitude, where the antecedent variables studied are perceived congruence, perceived authenticity, self-consciousness, and need for emotion as well as the consequences aspect consisting of brand attitude, purchase intention, and e-WOM intention.

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